

WAIS Inc

Wide Area Information Servers

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

INTERNET

A group of linked computer networks spanning the globe. The Internet is both an international forum for communication and a vast library of information. There is no central authority or single organization running the Internet.

WORLD WIDE WEB (WWW)

A system for creating and browsing information on the Internet using hypertext links. In a hypertext document you can "point and click" on highlighted items which then point to text in another location, either locally or at a different site. Started as a project by CERN (the European Laboratory for Particle Physics) as a way to share and distribute research and information over the Internet.

GOPHER

A popular text-based system used for browsing Internet resources. By running the gopher client software, a user can access menus listing the information that is available at a gopher server located at a particular site on the Internet.

MOSAIC

A popular navigation tool used over the Internet as a client program to access World Wide Web servers. Mosaic allows users to browse hypertext documents at different sites on the "web".

NCSA

National Center for Supercomputing Applications, located at the University of Illinois at Urbana. The Mosaic program used for navigating the Internet was developed at NCSA.

NETSCAPE™

A popular Internet navigation program used for browsing hypertext documents on the World Wide Web.

NETSURFING

Using a browsing program such as Netscape or Gopher to scan the Internet to see what's out there or to look for new "hot" sites of information. It bears some resemblance to "channelsurfing" on a television set over multiple cable stations.

POINT AND CLICK

Using hypertext links, you can simply "point and click" on a highlighted text or graphic to move to another document.

CLIENT/SERVER

Two separate programs, usually running on different computers which allow for a sharing of resources over a network. One program, called the server, provides the resource (such as data or menus), and the other program, the client, is used to access that resource.

WAN (WIDE AREA NETWORK)

A number of Local Area Networks (LANs) connected together, usually via leased telephone lines. A LAN is a network where the computers are connected directly, usually through some type of cable.

FACT SHEET: WAIS AND THE INTERNET

FINDING INFORMATION ON THE INTERNET

The Internet is used primarily as a means to communicate by electronic mail. It is also touted as a source of information for the world. Two important methods for navigating the Internet are browsing and searching. Software programs that let users browse, or "surf the net" are useful for understanding what is available on the Internet. Popular browsing programs include the text-based Gopher and a number of World Wide Web (WWW) browsers such as NCSA's Mosaic and Netscape. Searching is another method people use to access information on the Internet. The WAIS technology provides powerful search capabilities for web browsers.

WORLDWIDE WEB AND HYPERTEXT

Use the of the Web has been growing tremendously since the advent of simple browsing techniques. The WWW is a distributed hypertext program on the Internet. In a hypertext document users navigate by pointing and clicking on highlighted text which brings the user to various areas of interest. The WWW allows a hypertext browser to link documents in different locations on the Internet. WAIS allows users to go beyond pointing and clicking to natural language searches for information.

WAIS AND WWW AS COMPLIMENTARY TECHNOLOGIES

While browsing or "surfing" on the web is fun and interesting, it does not take full advantage of the resources available on the Internet. WAIS technology adds a powerful searching capabilities to the web, enabling users to move beyond simple browsing and on to specific information. WAIS allows users to "unlock the content behind the web."

Online newspapers provide a good example of how WAIS technology compliments the Word Wide Web. With a web browser, users can easily move around in various sections of the publication by pointing and clicking on hypertext links. WAIS allows the reader to search for specific articles about business, bylines by particular reporters, or their favorite sports team. The natural language search is made possible by the WAIS technology.

*Such as Find me All the articles on the Internet and
written by Frank Smith.*